Times 3/1/67

Journalistic Scavenging

The Times' series of five articles called "The Scavengers" by one Richard Warren Lewis, is a new low in journalism, and I am surprised at your poor taste in printing such an inept journalistic effort. He deals only in attempted character assassination and sarcastic innuendoes against everyone who has criticised in print, the conduct and findings of the Warren commission report, without even trying to answer or refute their charges.

The only rebuttal witnesses he quotes are W. J. Liebeler, John J. McCloy, Arlen Spector and Gerald R. Ford, all members of the commission. One would hardly expect them to agree with their critics. And while speaking of scavengers, he doesn't include the same Gerald R. Ford who was one of the first to rush into print with "Portrait of the Assassin."

Nor does he mention other books (such as the book on Oswald's Mother) which do not criticise the Warren commission, but which, never the less, made money from the event.

Incidentally, I wonder how much "moolah" this R. W. Lewis received for his factless and abortive series. But of course, by not criticising the Warren Report, he is immune to the epithet "scavenger."

He speaks of the "hoary gimmicks of the professional huckster—distortion, innuendo, conjecture and even sheer fantasy." Good grief, hasn't he got brains enough to see all these in his own series, particularly in his cheap attempt to discredit Penn Jones, jr., by belittling his small town newspaper and his conjecture of the crowd gossiping in the small town store in Midlothian, Tex., which is only about 25 miles from Dallas. I am amazed at the effrontery of this so-called journalist resorting to such a reprehensible "gimmick" in referring to an award-winning editor such as Penn Jones, jr.

Lewis refers to the many who wanted to believe that a conspiracy ordered the murder." No one wanted to believe this, but no one who has seriously gone into a study of available revelations, can escape this belief. Any other theory is entirely untenable, Earl Warren, et al, to the contrary.

I own and have read all the books referred to by Lewis plus others. In fact, I am making a collection of books and articles on the assassination. I even subscribed to Penn Jones" weekly newspaper, the Midlothian Mirror, just for his reports and editorials on the affair. I wonder how much of the material he tries to criticise has been read by this Lewis.

He also speaks of Penn Jones' "alarmist beliefs" in a "sinister plot" in connection with the mysterious deaths of 18 people connected with the events, but he fails to mention others, whose apparent fears have caused them to tear up roots and leave Texas, such as the roommate and "boy friend" of Jack Ruby (according to Warren Commission testimony) who left Texas suddenly and is reported to be in hiding somewhere in upstate New York. Then there is a policeman friend of Ruby, who resigned from the Dallas police force and went to California, and there are others. It seems to be a coincidence that practically all of these deaths and defections are of people whose testimony did or could shed light on the conspiracy theory.

I cannot believe that all these critics are irresponsible. In fact, most of the books are well-documented with references to the commission's exhibits, whereas Lewis' series has no documentation at all. I have the utmost faith that in the not-too-distant future, events will transpire to cause this Mr. Lewis to eat his words and I pity his digestive system when he does.

For the record, I have never written a word for remuneration, so can hardly be called a scavenger; but according to Mr. Lewis' definition of those who believe in the conspiracy theory, I may be termed a member of the "lunatic fringe."

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